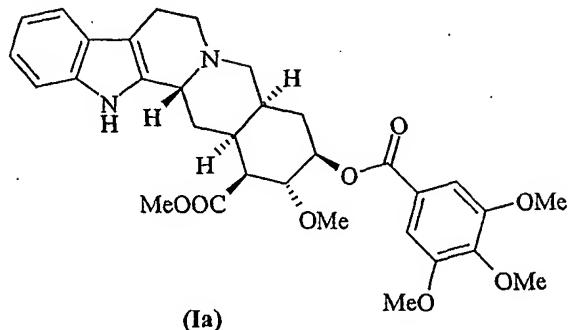


CLAIMS

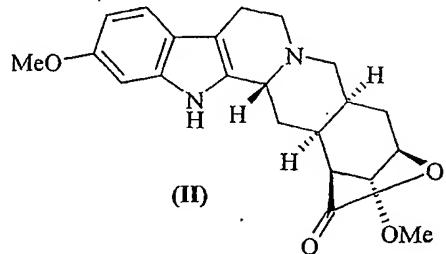
1. A process for the preparation of deserpidine (**Ia**)



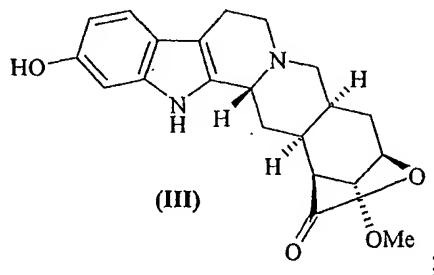
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comprising the following steps:

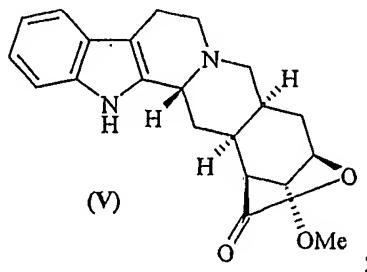
a) demethylation of reserpic acid lactone (**II**)



10 to give 11-*O*-demethyl reserpic acid lactone (**III**)

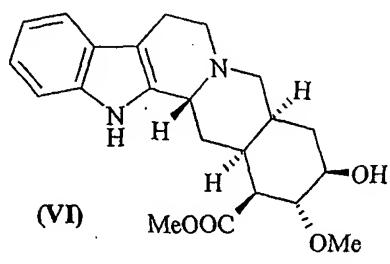


b) conversion of compound (**III**) to deserpidic acid lactone (**V**)



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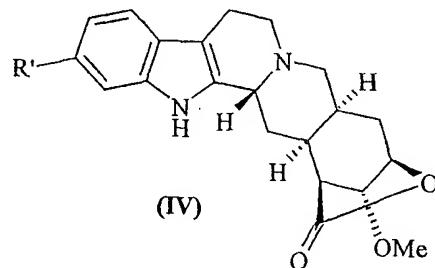
- c) hydrolysis of deserpodic acid lactone (V) to methyl deserpidate (VI)



- d) esterification of methyl deserpidate (VI) with 3,4,5-trimethoxybenzoic

5 acid to give deserpidine (Ia).

2. The process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the conversion of compound (III) to deserpodic acid lactone (V) is carried out transforming compound (III) into a compound of formula (IV)



10

in which R' is a leaving group

and reducing compound (IV).

3. The process as claimed in claim 2 in which in compound (IV) the R' group is selected from a sulfonate, an isoureido or a (5-phenyl-tetrazolyl)oxy group.

4. The process as claimed in claim 3 in which the R' group is *p*-toluenesulfonate or methanesulfonate.

5. The process as claimed in claim 4 in which the R' group is *p*-toluenesulfonate.

- 20 6. The process as claimed in claim 5 in which the reduction of compound (IV) is carried out with nickel Raney.

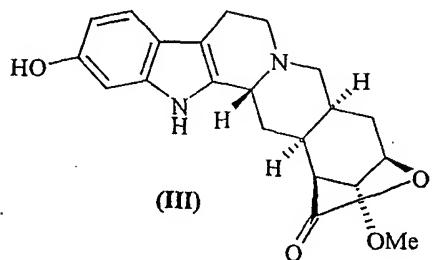
7. The process as claimed in claim 3 in which the R' group is an isoureido

group.

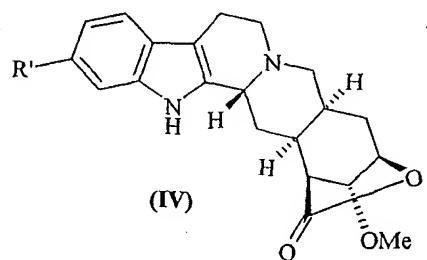
8. The process as claimed in claim 7 in which the reduction of compound (IV) is carried out with palladium on charcoal.

9. The compound of formula (III)

5



10. A compound of formula (IV)



10 in which R' is *p*-toluenesulfonate.